



ALEX CUYLER

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DATE: April 4, 2019
TO: Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
RE: RE: SB 276, relating to mattresses

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee:

Lane County supports the product stewardship statewide mattress recycling program that would be established by SB 276. We understand there are amendments forthcoming that will maintain the product stewardship framework, and improve the bill through clarifications to the roles and responsibilities of both the stewardship organization in implementing the program and the state in overseeing it. While we will need to review the amendments, we anticipate continuing to support the bill.

Under ORS Chapter 459, Lane County is responsible for the overall management of solid waste disposal and recycling within the Lane County “wasteshed”. That chapter also mandates that we attain and maintain a certain recycling rate. We operate a total of 15 transfer stations across the County and one regional landfill. The Short Mountain landfill is both an asset and a liability. Managed correctly, it will serve the disposal needs of our county’s residents and businesses for the next half century. Managed poorly, and it could become prematurely full, or worse, become an environmental nightmare. SB 276 falls into the managed correctly side of the equation. An industry developed landfill diversion framework for mattresses would remove a problematic material from the disposal stream and would result in a new feedstock of used materials which potentially are incorporated into new manufacturing efforts based in Oregon.

Our Short Mountain landfill’s capacity is based on the amount of materials deposited into it, and the level of compaction of the trash we are able to accomplish through the utilization of heavy compacting equipment that squashes the trash through the course of collection, transfer, and finally within the landfill. Mattresses are inherently designed to resist squashing. They can create pockets of oxygen within the fill, raising the potential for deep within the fill fires that are exceedingly challenging to extinguish. Our landfill operators would applaud the elimination of mattresses from our landfill.

SB 276 aligns with other extended producer responsibility frameworks that are operational within Oregon. We know these can work, as we’ve participated in the development and implementation of both the electronics product stewardship framework and the paint product stewardship framework. These materials were also historically problematic for landfill operators and are now being turned instead into feedstock for manufacturing opportunities that were more easily developed due to a regular supply being created from the industry managed collection framework.

We applaud Senator Manning for making this bill a priority and urge the Committee to support his work.